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DEPT FOR EB A/S ANTHONY WAYNE; SA/INS FOR J. BRENNIG, N.
DEAN; PLEASE PASS TO TSUNAMI RECONSTRUCTION TASK FORCE;
TREASURY FOR C. CARNES; MCC FOR D.NASSIRY

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [CE](#) [MV](#)

SUBJECT: SRI LANKAN POST-TSUNAMI RECONSTRUCTION UPDATE
(JUNE 22, 2005)

1. (U) This cable provides information for the June 23
post-Tsunami IAWG meeting.

Maldives Update

2. (SBU) We are still waiting for Government of Maldives
(GORM) Planning Department feedback for potential projects.
Nonetheless, given Washington guidance that uses for the
money should be general, we have suggested the following
way forward as we work with the GORM to finalize their
priorities:

--Transfer money in one tranche, via the GORM Federal
Reserve account in New York.

--Ambassador would sign bilateral agreement, on behalf of
State Department, which would explicitly note that all USG
agencies resident in Colombo will contribute to the
monitoring process as required, implementation would be
handled by the GORM.

--Embassy would request that other USG agencies be
available as required for monitoring and implementation
questions.

Sri Lanka: Outside Assessments

3. (U) The Sri Lankan NGO People's Action for Free and
Fair Elections (PAFFREL - a USAID grantee during the 2004
election cycle) has turned its attention to monitoring
implementation of tsunami assistance and has produced a
series of reports about conditions on the ground in tsunami
affected districts. These reports can be found at the
PAFFREL website (<http://www.lankaworld.com/paffrel/>). The
main concerns listed in the report include a lack of land
for housing outside the 100m/200m buffer zone, slow
progress in putting people back to work, inadequate washing
and sanitary facilities for women and girls in the camps
and increasing malnutrition among children in the camps.
The report outlines conditions by affected district and
while there is no uniformity, there are general problems
that appear to affect all affected areas. We are
following-up to find out how PAFFREL reached its conclusion
on "malnutrition" since this has not been an issue to date.

Housing

4. (U) According to TAFREN, as of June 14, 2005, 35,193
Transitional Accommodation units were completed and 7,455
more are under construction. Although pledges have been
received from over 30 donors to construct 53,000 such
units, TAFREN believes 45,000 will be sufficient. TAFREN
believes that by the end of June, when these 35,193
completed shelters are occupied and the 7,455 shelters
under construction are completed, all persons presently
living in welfare centers and tents would be accommodated.

5. (SBU) At a June 2, 2005 Transition Accommodation
Project (TAP)/UNHCR Shelter Coordination meeting however,
UNHCR Rep suggested that, based on field visits, 20-30% of
shelters in the "completed" category are sub-standard or
built on inappropriate sites. UNHCR does not have estimates
of the number of shelters that have been built and remain
unoccupied, but gave an example of a site in Batticaloa
where 1,600 shelters were constructed, all of which are
unoccupied because the potential beneficiaries find the
site unsuitable.

6. (SBU) UNHCR's shelter coordinator believes that the
number of displaced persons living with host families in
poor conditions could be substantial, given that up to 70%
of survivors in Ampara, according to their survey, went to
live with relatives or friends. He believes that an
intensive public information effort is the answer, to
inform families of their entitlement to shelter. This is
already underway in the South. As for those who are

awaiting electrical connections and adequate water and sanitation access, UNHCR believes that only a small minority currently benefit from such facilities. Again, a comprehensive survey would be needed to clarify the gaps.

17. (SBU) Comment: The figures we are getting on quantities, although they indicate real progress, could also be hiding significant quality problems. How serious these problems are depends on how long families will be obliged to stay in their present accommodation while awaiting permanent housing, which indicates the importance of coordinating with the permanent housing sector to judge transition periods. End Comment.

100m/200m Coastal Zone/DVC Follow-Up

18. (SBU) The President has convened a commission to study the 100m/200m buffer zone area and the first meeting of the commission will be June 24. The commission consists of the Secretary to the President W.J.S Karunaratne, who serves as

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Chairman, Chairman for the Task Force for Relief (TAFOR) Tilak Ranaviraja, Chairman for the Task Force for Rebuilding the Nation (TAFREN) Mano Tittawella, the Secretaries of Environment and Natural Resources,

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Fisheries, Urban Development and Water Supply, and Science and Technology, Director of Coast Conservation, Surveyor General, Central Environmental Authority Representative, Urban Development Authority Chairman, National Science Foundation and the TAFREN Housing Director (Note: many of these commission members were participants in our May 19 DVC. End Note).

19. (SBU) The Terms of Reference for the Commission are to:

--Examine the importance of establishing a buffer zone along the coastal belt of Sri Lanka, considering the adverse impacts of future coastal hazards;

--Recommend guidelines on the demarcation of a buffer zone and its effective enforcement;

--Advise on circumstances when deviations from the above guidelines may be authorized.

10. (SBU) We have a unique opportunity to influence this internal GSL debate, and urge that USG participants from the DVC, particularly from FEMA, OFDA and USGS, be made available for travel to Sri Lanka in early July. USAID has identified funding for three travelers. We were surprised to learn today that the FEMA participants may not be allowed to travel. We request clarification on this.

USTDA Visit

11. (SBU) USTDA had a successful visit and appears to have identified several potential projects, including the establishment of a GSL Emergency Management Department, which has been championed by IBM. For this endeavor, USTDA is considering technical assistance in the form of a former-FEMA consultant to visit Sri Lanka and work with relevant Ministries. USTDA is also considering two water supply projects, one in Jaffna and one in the South, which use US technologies to provide drinking water in remote locations. We understand that USTDA contractors will review these proposals and visit Sri Lanka within the next month to finalize scopes and budgets.

12. (SBU) We want to raise one cautionary flag on the Jaffna project - USTDA and its partner organization will need to be extremely careful to avoid interaction with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and performing any services that could be construed as "providing material benefit" to the LTTE. It is notoriously difficult to get items by road through LTTE-controlled territory to Jaffna without paying LTTE "customs" charges, something for which USG funds cannot be used. We will be happy to discuss this further with USTDA as the process moves forward.

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